

The Liturgy of the Eucharist (Mass): Who's House do we come to? Do we dress, talk and act -- as if we believe we are in God's House?

As Christian Catholics we come to God's House—His Church—to worship, pray and participate in the sacraments. Over the years, it seems that we've become overly comfortable with idle talk in the worship space, however. Talking in Church when not required by necessity of the liturgy or prayer of the Church, may at least be venially sinful for the following reasons:

1. It is the Lord's House, which Jesus taught is "***a house of prayer***" (Matthew 21:13).
2. It is a violation of justice against actual neighbors who are trying to pray. Necessity permits talking in the Worship Space. However, casual, day-to-day conversations need to occur in the Gathering Space (not within the Worship Space). Remember: You're in front of the Tabernacle. Would or does Jesus (and people praying around you) need to hear your talking?

The truth of this [reverential silence] is shown by the strict guard of silence maintained in the chapels of the Roman basilicas. This is an accurate reflection of the [centuries-old] Catholic Tradition of reverence and respect for the Church and for others.

3. Finally, it is a act against charity, since as Christians we should be [promoting the BE-ATTITUDES] to look after others first. If a person disregards others trying to pray, or worst of all did so with malice or contempt, it could even raise to the level of a mortal sin against charity.

Additionally, while we all may tend to casually "dress-down" during the week days, I would like to respectfully remind those parishioners who wish to exercise the ministry of Reader and/or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (EMHC) during week day Masses--as it is directed for **all** on the Sabbath and Holy Days of Obligations'--appropriate dress attire is required and expected for everyone entering into the Worship Space and especially, the Sanctuary area.

As the Magisterium has directed us on the Sabbath Day and Holy Days of Obligation to wear appropriate clothing attire (i.e., no flimsy, revealing or suggestive clothing; flip-flops; no sweats; no clothing with free-advertisement for sports teams, etc.)--the Mass remains the Divine and Holy Liturgy of the Church -- whether on Sunday, Holy Days of Obligation or during a week day. Therefore, appropriate attire is needed (not preferred, desired or optional) to:

- (1) Enter into the Worship Space--a designated house of prayer and worship; and
- (2) Dually important, when/if entering into the sacred sanctuary area as a liturgical minister.

As your Pastor of the OLV Parish for now almost 3 years, as a collective faith community, we need to begin to "change the tide" of being "too casual and comfortable" regarding dress attire and strolling in and out of the worship space and the sacred sanctuary, as if it were no special place--forgetting we are entering into the House of Almighty God.

In closing, excluding emergencies, no one should be entering or leaving the Worship Space during Mass until it is entirely completed. If we routinely, casually and without much thought leave the Mass early, I would like to leave you with a message framed above the main doors of the Basilica of St. Josephat in Milwaukee: ***"Remember: Judas left the meal early too!"***

Peace in Christ, Fr Bob